



HOW TO APPLY FOR A TREE REMOVAL/PRUNING PERMIT

WHEN IS A TREE REMOVAL OR PRUNING PERMIT REQUIRED?

Under the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance, a tree removal permit is required from the City Landscape Architect before removing any protected tree. Protected trees are, in general, all required trees on any developed property, memorial trees, trees planted as "replacement trees" as part of a development or tree removal project, trees eight inches in diameter or greater at 54 inches above the ground and certain native species that are four inches in diameter or greater. Multi-trunk trees are measured by adding together all of the trunks 54 inches above the ground. Permission from the City is required before pruning branches over one inch in diameter, relocating, removing, or replacing any tree shown on the approved landscaping plan for a site plan review, use permit, or planned development. Certified Arborists may be eligible for a yearly pruning permit for work in the City.

ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE REQUIREMENT?

Yes. Trees that are part of a working orchard or trees planted by a single family homeowner, other than required street trees, replacement trees, or protected trees, are exempt from this ordinance.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A TREE REMOVAL/PRUNING PERMIT?

The primary purpose of the ordinance is to preserve significant or landmark trees that add value to the property and neighborhood. Native trees such as the California Live Oak, California Bay Laurel, and California Buckeye are particularly important to preserve because of their

scenic and environmental benefits.

WHAT CRITERIA ARE USED TO ISSUE A TREE REMOVAL/PRUNING PERMIT?

Criteria considered in determining if a tree can be removed include:

- Condition of the tree, such as previous topping or disfigurement of the tree, dieback or poor health that might render the tree a hazard, poorly rooted trees, or fire prone trees in hillside areas.
- Location of the tree, such as proximity to existing structures or required pavement, or interference with utilities;
- Significance and value of the tree;
- Importance of tree to prevent soil erosion and drainage problems; and
- Number of other trees on site.
- Necessity to remove tree to allow reasonable development of property;

ARE REPLACEMENT TREES REQUIRED FOR TREES AUTHORIZED FOR REMOVAL?

Replacement trees are required by the Ordinance and will be specified in the tree removal permit. The number and size of replacement trees will be based on the value of the trees to be removed, as determined a Certified Arborist and approved by the City Landscape Architect. The value of a tree is based on condition or health, location, species, and size. The species of the replacement tree is usually flexible, although the City Landscape Architect may specify the tree species for certain projects.

WHAT DOES IT COST?

The fee for a tree removal permit is \$50. A pruning permit is \$20 per site. The permit is valid for all trees affected for a specific site and specific project. If more than one site visit is required by the City Landscape Architect specific to the tree removal or tree pruning permit, an additional fee of \$54 per site visit may be charged. Certified arborists may obtain annual pruning permits for \$200 per year for all pruning work done by that person or company.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS FOR OBTAINING A TREE REMOVAL/PRUNING PERMIT?

1. If removal or pruning of a tree is associated with construction of a building, structure, or other site improvements, all trees shall be shown on the proposed site and grading plans. Clearly indicate the size, species, and health of the tree and whether the trees will be removed or preserved. Sites with over three trees or with large mature trees must have an arborist report. The report will be evaluated as part of the City's review process for the project. A tree removal/pruning permit will be issued when a grading or building permit is processed for the project.
2. If removal or pruning of a tree covered under the Ordinance is **not** associated with specific site improvements, or construction of a building or structure, you can pick up a permit at City Hall or request a permit from the City by phone, fax, or in writing. State a reason for removal and your proposal for replacement of the tree(s). Give the method proposed for pruning the tree(s). An inspection may be scheduled to evaluate the tree(s). If there are more than three trees, you will need an arborist report.

MAY A DECISION BE APPEALED?

A written appeal to the Planning Director may be filed with the Director within 10 days after receiving the decision on a tree removal.

WHO CAN PRUNE OR REMOVE MY TREE?

The City may remove, replace, or prune trees that are located between the curb and the sidewalk in a planter strip in some residential neighborhoods. However, you would be responsible for watering and caring for your tree. If you have any questions about who maintains your tree, contact the City's Landscape Maintenance Division at (510) 583-8906 for a specific determination about your tree.

The City does **not** prune or remove any trees located on private property or on industrial, commercial or multifamily developments. For a list of private firms that can perform the work, check the yellow pages under "Tree Service" or "Arborist." You should request certificates of liability and workmen's compensation insurance, a copy of their City business license, and ask for local references. Make sure that they obtain a Tree Removal/Pruning permit from the City if they are pruning or removing a protected tree. Do not top or allow others to top your trees, as this will cause new branches to be weakly attached to the trunk and liable to come down in a storm. When pruning branches over one inch in diameter or removing large mature trees, contact a tree service with a certified arborist on staff.

IS THERE A PENALTY FOR REMOVING A TREE WITHOUT A PERMIT?

Yes, a property owner can be assessed a penalty equal to the value of the tree for removing, damaging, or relocating a protected tree without a permit. In addition, they will be required to install replacement trees or provide another suitable remedy.